

Week Ending Friday, September 12, 1997

Remarks on the Death of Mother Teresa and an Exchange With Reporters in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

September 5, 1997

The President. With the passing of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the world has lost one of the giants of our time. She served the poor, the suffering, and the dying, and in so doing, she served as an inspiration and a challenge to all the rest of us. With the power of her humble and unconquerable faith, she touched the lives of millions of people in India, here in the United States, and throughout the world.

Like anyone who ever met her, I was profoundly moved by her conviction and her courage. Hillary had the privilege of working with Mother Teresa and her community to open a home for abandoned babies in Washington, and later she and Chelsea had the opportunity to see her and her community work firsthand in India.

The home for the dying she opened in Calcutta almost 50 years ago is called *Nirmal Hriday*, pure heart. If ever there was a pure heart, it was hers. Mother Teresa is gone, but the Gospel teaches us that faith, hope, and love endure. She had them in abundance, and they will stay with us forever.

Deaths of Princess Diana and Mother Teresa

Q. Mr. President, this has been quite a week for the loss of meaningful women. Any comment—[inaudible]—

The President. Well, you know Hillary is going to leave in just a—well, a couple of hours now, maybe even shorter, to fly to London to the funeral of Princess Diana. And I think the world has been profoundly moved by that. And obviously, hundreds of millions of people around the world looked up to Mother Teresa and admired her. I think it

will be a time of great reflection, and I hope a time of rededication.

I think all of us were deeply moved by the pictures today from London of Princess Diana's sons and Prince Charles and the Royal Family greeting the mourners and beginning the sort of public healing process, along with the private one. And I think tomorrow will be a sad but a very important and positive day.

Q. Do you think there might be a chance the First Lady might go to Mother Teresa's funeral?

The President. I don't know. I just heard.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. at the press pool holding area. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 6, 1997

Good morning. I'm speaking to you this morning from the Edgartown Elementary School in Martha's Vineyard on the last day of a very special 3-week family vacation. This has been an especially important time for Hillary, Chelsea, and me, because it's the last vacation we'll have before Chelsea goes off to college in a few weeks. We've enjoyed both the natural splendor of this wonderful place and the natural warmth that the people of this community, some of whom are with us here today, have shown to all of us during our visit.

Today the world mourns the loss of two remarkable women. Their lives were very different but ultimately bound together by a common concern for and commitment to the dignity and worth of every human being, especially those too often overlooked, the desperately poor, the abandoned, the sick, and the dying.

With the passing of Mother Teresa of Calcutta yesterday, the world has lost one of this

century's greatest humanitarians. Her world-wide ministry to the poor, the suffering, and the dying has served as an inspiration to all of us. With the enormous power of her humble faith and her lifetime of living it, she touched the lives of millions of people, not only in India but in our country and all around the world. Hillary and Chelsea will never forget visiting her mission in Calcutta, and we will always treasure the time we spent with her and be especially grateful for the home for abandoned babies she and her order opened in Washington, and the chance Hillary had to help in getting it established.

Anyone who ever met Mother Teresa could see that within her very small frame, she carried a very big heart, big enough to follow God's will to show compassion and love for all our children, especially the sick and the forgotten. Mother Teresa once said, "The test at the end of life is not what you do; it is how much of yourself, how much love you put into what you do." Well, Mother Teresa put all of herself, all of her love, into serving mankind, and the world is a much better and nobler place because of how she lived.

The First Lady today is representing our Nation at the funeral of another woman of compassion, England's Princess Diana, whose tragic death a few days ago shocked and saddened millions around the world. The enormous outpouring of grief and support in the wake of Diana's death demonstrates that people saw in her more than her radiant beauty but, instead, a different kind of royalty. She became, as Elton John said at her funeral, England's rose, because she shared the life struggles of ordinary people, she cared about them. She was not too self-absorbed to lend her hand and her heart to people in pain or in peril, especially people with AIDS and the innocent victims of landmines.

Hillary and I liked her very much. She was a young woman of great gifts coming into her own, determined to raise her children to be well-grounded, strong young men, not isolated by their royal lineage, and determined to make a contribution to the people of Great Britain and the world. On her trips to Washington, Hillary talked with her about the challenges of parenting and Diana's civic

commitments, her campaigns on behalf of children, for people with AIDS, and to ban landmines.

To our friends in Great Britain, I wish to express a special message of sympathy. Our two peoples who experienced so much together are experiencing this sad event together. Diana was not ours, but we grieve alongside you.

Mother Teresa and Princess Diana, two women of vastly different backgrounds and worlds, are gone. But each of them in her own way has shown us what it is to live a life of meaning through concern for others. That is the great legacy they leave us. Let us honor it. For whether we live to a ripe old age or must leave this life too soon, our time on Earth is short, and we live on only through the gifts we give to others who share the journey with us.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from Edgartown Elementary School in Martha's Vineyard, MA.

Remarks at Four Seasons Elementary School in Gambrills, Maryland

September 8, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. Jonathan, this is an important, good book for me to be reading. I've been reading a biography—right now, this morning, I was reading before I came to work—of President Grant, who was the commanding general of the Union forces in the Civil War. And I haven't gotten to the part about the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack* yet, so I thank you. So I can read this as long as I have it back by the 27th, huh? [*Laughter*]

Secretary Riley, Principal Leone, Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Townsend, Senator Sarbanes. I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to my good friend Congressman Steny Hoyer; I know I'm in his district. And his late wife was a committed teacher of young children, and he wanted me to come here to his congressional district to make this announcement. And looking at you, I'm certainly glad I did. And I thank you for making me feel so welcome.